Running a business from home provides many benefits, such as a short commute and a flexible schedule, but it also can create challenges. Take Sweatman Young, a Bonney Lake, Washington-based general contractor that specializes in restoration of historic homes. Bill and Rhonda Sweatman run the company from their garage and employ several family members. Their company’s computer network is used by a half-dozen people, including Bill and Rhonda’s daughter Amanda (who works part-time for the company) and Rhonda’s mother (who lives with them).

While this arrangement is homey, it also makes Sweatman Young’s simple peer-to-peer network a target for attacks. “These people can be hit with ease by drive-by malware,” explains Darrel Bowman, CEO of Symantec partner myNetworkCompany.com, because Rhonda’s mother is using her computer recreationally and Amanda typically uses her laptop at offsite at other less-secure settings.

THE CHALLENGE
A few years ago, a particularly stubborn virus spread like wildfire through Sweatman Young’s network. “We cleaned up each machine, one at a time,” Bowman recalls. “The minute we put a machine back on the network, it infected everything again. It was that fast,” he says, snapping his fingers.

The malware Bowman found (and eventually remediated) was an early polymorphic virus—one that alters its code to avoid detection as it moves from computer to computer. Sweatman Young occasionally was hit by ordinary viruses as well, and those incidents also proved debilitating.

“When outbreaks happened, it just shut everything down,” Rhonda says. “And they invariably came when I had a client waiting for a PDF.” Outbreaks affected the bottom line, and also caused strife in the family. “They really made my husband mad,” she says with a nervous laugh.

THE SOLUTION
Fortunately, these stressful events were rare; myNetworkCompany.com had kept Sweatman Young’s Symantec security software up to date for more than a decade, which nipped all but the worst problems in the bud.

But because of its exposure to drive-by malware and its vulnerability to polymorphic attacks, Sweatman Young was an ideal beta test site for Symantec™ Endpoint Protection 12. “Testing it at Rhonda’s office was the right thing at the right time,” Bowman says.

MyNetworkCompany.com engineers installed the beta version on all the company’s computers, including Amanda’s laptop. “Her computer is protected a little bit better than your typical offsite user,” Bowman says with a chuckle.

THE BENEFITS
In the months since the software was installed, Sweatman Young has experienced no malware incidents of any kind, and computer performance has been excellent.

“I don’t even know for sure that Symantec’s running,” Rhonda says with a hearty laugh. “It appears to be working, because nothing corrupt has happened. That’s invaluable, and I’m happy.”

Now that the product is in general availability, Bowman is upgrading Sweatman Young to the final code of Symantec Endpoint Protection 12. Rhonda’s comfortable with that. “I trust Darrel,” she says. “If he says something’s in my best interests, I go with it.”

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Rhonda Sweatman
Office Manager, Sweatman Young